

### **IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as follows:

1.       **(Currently Amended)** A sliding element for seals comprising a fired preformed material including 25 to 75 weight % carbonaceous impalpable powdery aggregate of non-graphitizing carbon and/or graphitizing carbon and 20 to 50 weight % synthetic resin as a binder, wherein carbonaceous carbon fibers free of surface treatment are blended within the range of 5 to 25 weight % and inside a carbon matrix, said carbon fibers are randomly scattered, and wherein said carbon fibers are 5 to 30  $\mu$ m in diameter and 50 to 300  $\mu$ m in length.

2.       **(Canceled)**

3.       **(Previously Presented)**       The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein a Vickers hardness of said carbonaceous impalpable powdery aggregate of non-graphitizing carbon and/or graphitizing carbon is 80 or more.

4.       **(Previously Presented)**       The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein said synthetic resin as said binder includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, and naphthalene resin.

5.       **(Canceled)**

6.       **(Previously Presented)**       The sliding element for seals according to claim 3, wherein said synthetic resin as said binder includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, and naphthalene resin.

7. **(Currently Amended)** The sliding element for seals according to claim **[[2]] 1**, wherein the sliding element for seals is used as one of a mechanical seal for a water pump, a mechanical seal for a compressor of a car air conditioner, a mechanical seal for a pump of industrial use and a mechanical seal for a pump of all purposes.

8. **(Previously Presented)** The sliding element for seals according to claim 3, wherein the sliding element for seals is used as one of a mechanical seal for a water pump, a mechanical seal for a compressor of a car air conditioner, a mechanical seal for a pump of industrial use and a mechanical seal for a pump of all purposes.

9. **(Previously Presented)** The sliding element for seals according to claim 4, wherein the sliding element for seals is used as one of a mechanical seal for a water pump, a mechanical seal for a compressor of a car air conditioner, a mechanical seal for a pump of industrial use and a mechanical seal for a pump of all purposes.

10. **(Previously Presented)** A seal assembly comprising a sliding element according to claim 1 and a mating sliding element comprised of a material having a Vickers hardness greater than that of the sliding element of claim 1.

11. **(Previously Presented)** The seal assembly according to claim 10, wherein the mating sliding element is comprised of silicon carbide.

12. **(Currently Amended)** A process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals, comprising the steps of:

blending a source material comprising 25 to 75 weight % carbonaceous impalpable powdery aggregate of non-graphitizing carbon and/or graphitizing carbon and 20 to 50 weight % synthetic resin as a binder with 5 to 25 weight % carbonaceous carbon fibers free of surface treatment;

mixing, kneading and molding the blended material to a ~~perform~~ preform; and

firing the preform at a predetermined temperature,

wherein said carbon fibers are 5 to 30  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter and 50 to 300  $\mu\text{m}$  in length.

13. **(Canceled)**

14. **(Previously Presented)** The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals according to claim 12, wherein said synthetic resin as said binder includes at least one of phenolic resin, epoxy resin, furan resin, polyester resin, and naphthalene resin, and wherein a firing temperature for said firing is 800 to 1500°C.

15. **(Canceled)**

16. **(Previously Presented)** The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein said carbon fibers are manufactured from one of polyacrylonitrile series carbon fibers and pitch series carbon fibers.

17. **(Previously Presented)** The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein said carbon fibers withstand a maximum heat treatment temperature of 1500°C.

18.     **(Previously Presented)**     The sliding element for seals according to claim 1, wherein said carbon fibers have a Vickers hardness of 200 or more.

19.     **(Previously Presented)**     The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals according to claim 12, wherein said carbon fibers are manufactured from one of polyacrylonitrile series carbon fibers and pitch series carbon fibers.

20.     **(Previously Presented)**     The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals according to claim 12, wherein said carbon fibers withstand a maximum heat treatment temperature of 1500°C.

21.     **(Previously Presented)**     The process of manufacturing a sliding element for seals according to claim 12, wherein said carbon fibers have a Vickers hardness of 200 or more.